



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Mike Knapp

For Immediate Release

February 1, 2005

Contact: Joyce Fuhrmann
(240)777-7977

N
E
W
S
R
E
L
E
A
S
E

KNAPP URGES CLARITY, ACCOUNTABILITY IN COUNTY BUDGETING

Resolution requires budget priorities, outcome measures

Citing the need for clarity and accountability in the county budget, Councilmember Mike Knapp today introduced a resolution requiring county agencies and programs to formally establish clear budget priorities and performance measures as part of their annual budget requests. The resolution also requires the County Council to establish annual budget priorities by October 1 as part of the framework for developing a more “user-friendly” budget for the following fiscal year.

“I believe the council needs to seriously think about what its priorities for the county are, not just in committee discussions, but more expansively – and well before the first budget document hits our desks at the beginning of the budget process,” Knapp said. “These priorities aren’t a list of favorite projects, but rather a list of what’s fundamentally important to the county and its residents.

“County residents deserve to know more about the programs their tax dollars fund,” said Councilmember Knapp. “They want to make sure those programs are effective and that their monies are being used wisely.”

(more...)

page two

The measure -- co-sponsored by Councilmembers Marilyn Praisner, Michael Subin, Nancy Floreen, and Phil Andrews – requires County agencies, as they develop their recommended budgets each year, to:

- Identify their own budget priorities;
- Provide clear information on cost-effectiveness of programs;
- Provide performance measures on individual programs to assess results achieved with past funding;
- Identify information and process used to review program effectiveness; and
- Link resource requests to performance measures

Established performance measures will enable the Council and the community to assess the results achieved with the allocated funds.

“In the past, we’ve had a tendency to measure our commitment to a project or program by how much we can spend on it, just as we’ve measured a program’s importance or success by how much money it spends annually,” Knapp said. “We need outcomes that we can measure, and this resolution formally asks agencies how effective their programs are, not just how much they spent.”

Knapp also pointed out that a Government Performance Project/Pew Charitable Trusts study of state financing gave Maryland a grade of B, largely because the state did not have a clear, easy-to-follow budget process, or establish long-term budget outcomes.

#